

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH

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S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

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SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEURCAP GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL., CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - NOVEMBER 22

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR NOVEMBER 22,
1976:

Q. WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW, IF ANY, ON THE
OPENING OF A PLO OFFICE HERE?

A. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IS
OPENED IN WASHINGTON, IS THE SAME AS APPLIES TO THE PLO
INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK -- THAT IS, SO LONG AS THE
OFFICE IS REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE UNDER
THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT, AND CONFORMS TO OUR
LAWS AND THE PERSONS STAFFING HAVE LEGAL STATUS UNDER OUR
VISA LAWS THEN THERE IS NO LEGAL BAR TO ITS BEING OPENED.

Q. WHAT WAS THE PREVIOUS BAR WHICH PROHIBITED THE PLO FROM
VISITING WASHINGTON UNDER THE 25-MILE LIMITATION--THEY HAD
TO SEEK SPECIAL PERMISSION.

A. THAT APPLIED TO THE STAFF OF THE PLO UN OBSERVER MISSION
IN NEW YORK, NOT TO THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK.

Q. SO YOU SAY THIS DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN THE
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AMERICAN POLICY?

A. ABSOLUTELY NOT. THERE IS NO CHANGE.

Q. WILL YOU EXPLAIN THAT DIFFERENCE AGAIN -- THE PLO
OBSERVER MISSION IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PLO INFORMATION
OFFICE?

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IS THERE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLO, IN GENERAL? THE PLO OBSERVER MISSION AT THE UN (INAUDIBLE) --?

A. NO. THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE PREDATES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLO OBSERVER MISSION IN NEW YORK.

Q. WHEN WAS THAT SET UP IN NEW YORK?

A. I DO NOT HAVE THE DATE, BUT IT WAS SOME YEARS BEFORE THE OBSERVER MISSION. I WANT TO CHECK THAT. ON BACKGROUND, I THINK IT HAS BEEN THERE TEN YEARS, BUT LET ME CHECK IT. END BACKGROUND.

Q. '65.

A. WAS IT '65?

Q. YOU SEEM TO HAVE SOME GRASP OF WHAT THE FUNCTION OF THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE WOULD BE. CAN YOU PLEASE TELL US WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THINKS THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE WILL DO IN WASHINGTON?

A. FIRST, MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT AN APPLICATION IS MADE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. I HAVE NOT SEEN THAT APPLICATION, SO I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY STATED AS THE PURPOSE -- BUT I ASSUME IT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT EITHER THE ORGANIZATION OR THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION--BUT I HAVE NOT SEEN THE STATED PURPOSE IN THEIR APPLICATION.

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Q. MAY I ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION?

A. YES.

Q. THERE WAS A LITTLE BIT OF STATE DEPARTMENT ANNOYANCE THE LAST TIME A PLO DIPLOMAT -- IN FACT THIS FELLOW SHAFIK AL-HOUT -- VISITED WASHINGTON BECAUSE HE APPEARED ON A NUMBER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND GAVE SOME NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWS, AND THAT, APPARENTLY CONTRADICTED SOME UNDERSTANDING THAT WE HAD WITH THEM.

NOW ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE COMING TO WASHINGTON FREE TO CARRY ON THAT KIND OF ACTIVITY -- TO APPEAR ON TELEVISION, TO GIVE NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWS AND SO ON?

A. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE UN OBSERVER MISSION AND THE INFORMATION OFFICE. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL APPLY TO THE STAFF OF THE PLO OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UN.

Q. AND THOSE STILL APPLY?

A. YES, SIR.

Q. IS THE DISTINCTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISA THAT THEY OBTAIN COMING INTO THE COUNTRY? IS THAT WHY? IS THAT WHY? IS THAT WRONG? IS THAT WHY?

A. YES, THERE WOULD BE A DISTINCTION THERE, AS WELL.

Q. OH, SO IN OTHER WORDS, IF A MEMBER OF THE DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN NEW YORK WANTS TO COME IN --

A. THE OBSERVER MISSION.

Q. -- THE OBSERVER MISSION -- HE STILL HAS TO GET SPECIAL PERMISSION. IS THAT RIGHT?

A. YES.

Q. WHAT IF HE IS A MEMBER OF BOTH THE OBSERVER MISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE INFORMATION OFFICE, DO THEY JUST TRAVEL FREELY BACK AND FORTH?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS A DUALITY IN THE STAFF. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT --

Q. IS THERE A FUNCTION THERE? IN NEW YORK?

A. -- IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THEY ARE SEPARATE. IT WOULD DEPEND UPON THE STATUS OF THAT PERSON IN NEW YORK.

NOW I AM NOT SURE THAT THE STATUS OF ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF EITHER THE MISSION, OR THE INFORMATION OFFICE, ARE ALL PALESTINIANS -- HERE ON FOREIGN DOCUMENTATION. THERE MAY BE SOME WHO HAVE PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS. BUT AGAIN I HAVE TO PUT THAT ON BACKGROUND. I DO NOT KNOW, I AM JUST SPECULATING.

Q. WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE ON THE GENTLEMEN OPENING THE PLO OFFICE? I UNDERSTAND REPORTS ARE THAT HE IS SUDANESE -- HOLDING A SUDANESE PASSPORT.

Q. THE WHOLE --

Q. DOES HE COME IN ON A LIMITED VISA?

A. THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF HIS VISA -- AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE WERE TWO PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON. ONE OF THEM HAS LEFT.

WE BEGAN OVER THE WEEKEND, WHEN WE KNEW THEY WERE HERE, LAST WEEK, AN INVESTIGATION AS TO THEIR STATUS -- IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT SORT OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION THEY HAD, AND HOW THEY GOT INTO THE COUNTRY.

WE HAVE NOT COMPLETED THAT INVESTIGATION, AND WHEN THAT INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED, THEN I WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF VISAS OR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS THEY HAD.

I AM AWARE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS IN THE PRESS
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ABOUT IT, BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM THAT UNTIL I SEE THE RESULTS OF THIS INVESTIGATION.

NOW THE REPRESENTATIVES -- THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THE TWO NOW HERE. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THEY CAME TO WASHINGTON TWO WEEKS AGO AND SAW A NUMBER OF PRIVATE AMERICANS. NO OFFICIAL OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS SEEN, OR TALKED, TO THEM. WE DID NOT KNOW THEY WERE COMING UNTIL WE WERE INFORMED BY THE PRIVATE CITIZENS THAT THEY CONTACTED -- THAT THEY WERE HERE.

THESE CITIZENS THAT THEY CONTACTED, RELAYED TO THE DEPARTMENT THE DESIRE OF THESE TWO MEN TO MEET WITH U.S. OFFICIALS. WE REITERATED TO THE CITIZENS OUR STANDING PROHIBITION OF ANY SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT BY U.S. OFFICIALS -- THAT THIS POLICY REMAINED UNCHANGED AND THAT THEREFORE NO U.S. OFFICIAL WOULD SEE THEM -- IN ACCORDANCE

WITH THAT POLICY. AND JUST TO PUT THE POLICY ON THE RECORD: BEFORE WE WOULD EVEN REVIEW THIS POLICY -- AS WE HAVE SAID MANY TIMES -- THE PLO MUST RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, AND THEY MUST ACCEPT RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. AND IF THEY MEET THESE TWO PRECONDITIONS -- WE WOULD THEN LOOK AT THE SITUATION.

Q. WHY DID YOU FIND IT NECESSARY TO TELL PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS WHAT THE U.S. POLICY IS ON THE PALESTINIANS?

A. BECAUSE THEY CONTACTED US.

Q. BUT I MEAN -- THEY ARE PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. WHAT DO THEY CARE ABOUT WHAT YOUR POLICY IS?

A. AS I SAID, THE PRIVATE CITIZENS WERE CONTACTED BY THE TWO REPRESENTATIVES.

Q. I UNDERSTAND.

A. AND THESE CITIZENS RELAYED TO THE DEPARTMENT, THE DESIRES OF THESE TWO MEN TO MEET WITH U.S. OFFICIALS.

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Q. WHO ARE THESE CITIZENS YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?

A. THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT FEEL IT CAN IDENTIFY THE CITIZENS WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION, AND WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THEIR PERMISSION.

Q. SO NO --

Q. WELL FRANKLY, WHAT IS THE --

A. -- AND SO, YOU COULD ASK THE PALESTINIANS FOR EXAMPLE, WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH -- BUT WE DO NOT THINK IT IS FOR US TO IDENTIFY THEM.

Q. WERE THESE AMERICAN CITIZENS?

A. AMERICAN CITIZENS.

Q. WELL, WERE THEY ACTING AS AGENTS OF -- NOT

Q. WERE THEY JUST FROM ANOTHER -- NOT ANOTHER COUNTRY BUT ANOTHER GROUP THAT WOULD BE OBLIGED TO REGISTER UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT, TOO, IF THEY CALL UP ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE MEETINGS?

A. I DO NOT THINK SO. NO.

Q. WHAT IS THE LOGIC, THEN, OF A BASIC POSITION HERE WHICH PRECLUDES THE PLO FROM TRAVELING AROUND THE UNITED STATES -- BUT PERMITS ANYBODY WHO COMES IN AND REGISTERS WITH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO TRAVEL AROUND THE UNITED STATES?

A. IT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE STATUS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

THE OBSERVER MISSION HAS A SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND WE ADMIT ITS STAFF, UNDER OUR OBLIGATION AS THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO THE U.N.

THAT IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH IS ESTABLISHED ACCORDING TO OUR DOMESTIC LAWS.

Q. WHAT IS TO PRECLUDE THESE MEMBERS OF THE PLO OBSERVER MISSION FROM JOINING THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, AND TRAVELING WHERE EVER THEY WISH?

A. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR SUCH REASON. AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE POSITION OF THOSE PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES AS MEMBERS OF THE U.N. OBSERVER MISSION.

Q. IS THERE ANY LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO CAN BE MEMBERS OF THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN WASHINGTON?

A. I DO NOT -- AGAIN, YOU SHOULD ASK THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT. I DO NOT THINK THERE ARE RESTRICTIONS ON THE SIZE OF STAFFS OF INFORMATION OFFICES OR NUMBER OF FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTERED UNDER OUR LAWS.

Q. I DON'T BELIEVE THERE ARE, EITHER. I WOULD IMAGINE THAT UNDER OUR LAWS, A HUNDRED COULD REGISTER AS MEMBERS OF THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE -- AND DO WHAT THEY WISH UNDER THE EXISTING PROCEDURES.

A. BEAR IN MIND, OF COURSE, THAT A GOOD NUMBER -- I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE PERCENTAGE IS -- OF PEOPLE WHO REGISTER UNDER THIS LAW ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS.

Q. WHEN YASSER ARAFAT CAME TO THE UNITED STATES, WAS HE BOUND BY ANY RESTRICTIONS AS TO HOW FAR HE COULD TRAVEL, OR WHAT HE COULD DO?

A. YES, I THINK HE WAS.

Q. WHY?

A. BECAUSE HE WAS COMING ONLY TO THE U.N.

Q. WHAT IF HE COMES BACK AS A MEMBER OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE, ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT HE CAN DO OR WHERE HE CAN GO?

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A. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE PLO IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS BEEN PROSCRIBED BY THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, SO THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE PLO WHO APPLIES FOR A VISA -- HIS APPLICATION IS REFERRED TO WASHINGTON, AND HE HAS TO SEEK A WAIVER.

Q. I'M SORRY?

I MEAN -- I AM LOST -- I HAVE LOST THE DISTINCTION. I THOUGHT IF YOU WERE A MEMBER OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE, YOU COULD KIND OF -- YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN. ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU ARE TELLING US?

A. NO.

I SAID THAT PERSONS STAFFING SUCH OFFICES WOULD HAVE TO HAVE LEGAL STATUS UNDER OUR VISA LAWS.

Q. AND WHAT ARE THEY?

A. AND THE VISA LAWS REQUIRE THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATED WITH THE PLO WHO WAS SO IDENTIFIED AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION, WOULD BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN A WAIVER TO RECEIVE A VISA.

AND AS I INDICATED TO MURREY EARLIER, A GOOD NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO REGISTER UNDER THIS FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION PROCEDURE AT JUSTICE, ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS.

Q. YOU SAY THAT ONE OF THE CONDITIONS FOR OUR HAVING ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PLO WOULD BE THEIR RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST.

HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOTICED ANY TENDENCY IN RECENT PLO STATEMENTS, TO DO JUST THAT?

A. I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY ASSESSMENT, OR ANALYSIS OF RECENT STATEMENTS. BUT I AM NOT AWARE THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF THE PLO ON THAT SITUATION.

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Q. YOU ARE INCLUDING THE -- YOU ARE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE COMMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE LAST WEEK BY THE VARIOUS PLO OFFICIALS, THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO

ACCEPT A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP?

A. THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF STATEMENTS MADE RECENTLY. BUT THESE HAVE NOT, CERTAINLY, CAUSED US TO CHANGE OUR ASSESSMENT.

Q. ARE THE CITIZENS WHO CONTACTED THE STATE DEPARTMENT ASKING YOU TO SEE THESE PLO REPRESENTATIVES, AMERICAN CITIZENS, OR CITIZENS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY?

A. AMERICAN CITIZENS.

Q. ARE THEY RETAINED BY THE PLO OFFICE? OR DID THEY DO THIS FREELY AND OF THEIR -- VOLUNTARILY?

A. ALL I HAVE BEEN INFORMED IS THAT THESE TWO REPRESENTATIVES HAVE CONTACTED A NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO, IN TURN, CONTACTED US.

Q. ARE THESE AMERICAN CITIZENS, MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF ALL OF THEM SO I CANNOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION.

Q. WELL I DIDN'T ASK FOR ALL OF THEM.
ARE ANY OF THEM MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. DO YOU KNOW -- ONE OF THE DISTINCTIONS YOU ARE MAKING HERE IS THE DIFFERENCE -- IN PURPOSE AND FUNCTION, I GUESS -- BETWEEN AN INFORMATION OFFICE AND A U.N. OBSERVER MISSION.

A. YES.

Q. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TWO? WOULD THEY BE TAKING DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE PLO'S RIGHT TO SET UP A STATE? WOULD THEY BE TAKING DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE PLO'S RIGHT TO SPREADING ITS

VIEWS:

A. I THINK THE DISTINCTION IS THEIR PURPOSE FOR BEING HERE IN THE UNITED STATES. IN THE CASE OF THE PURPOSE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE U.N. OBSERVER MISSION, THEIR PURPOSE IS TO BE AT THE U.N. TO STAFF THE OBSERVER

MISSION AT THE U.N. AND THEIR FUNCTIONS ARE RESTRICTED TO THE U.N.

THE INFORMATION OFFICE APPLIES UNDER OUR LAWS TO REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION AND CARRIES OUT ACTIVITIES THAT ARE STATED IN THEIR APPLICATION.

Q. DO THEY --

A. I HAVE NOT SEEN THEIR APPLICATION, BUT I ASSUME IT IS AVAILABLE AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Q. BUT IN ONE CASE YOU ARE SAYING THE APPLICATION -- THE FUNCTION -- IS TO PRESENT A PALESTINIAN VIEW AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

AND IN THE OTHER CASE, IT IS TO PRESENT THE PALESTINIAN VIEW, I SUPPOSE, TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- BY WAY OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE.

BUT THE FUNCTION IS REALLY THE SAME. YOU ARE JUST TALKING ABOUT GEOGRAPHY IN TERMS OF WHERE THEY CAN DO IT -- IS THAT CORRECT?

A. NO, I DO NOT THINK --

Q. WHAT WOULD REALLY BE THE DIFFERENCE?

A. I THINK THERE HAVE BEEN OBSERVER MISSIONS AT THE U.N. ALMOST SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN THE U.S. AND IN THAT--

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Q. YES, WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THAT.

A. DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Q. NO. WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT THE U.N. HAS BEEN HERE.

A. AND I AM TRYING TO EXPLAIN AND PUT THIS INTO THE CONTEXT OF THE UN --

Q. YES.

A. -- THAT THERE HAVE BEEN OBSERVER MISSIONS AT THE U.N. AND I THINK THAT OUR OBLIGATION AS HOST COUNTRY TO THE U.N. IS QUITE SEPARATE FROM PROVISIONS OF U.S. LAW THAT PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE TO REGISTER AS FOREIGN AGENTS.

Q. IS IT THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE COULD POSSIBLY, OR POTENTIALLY,
BE HELPFUL IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER THAT. I DO NOT
KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.

AN APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE. NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE
ON IT.

Q. HAVE YOU HAD ANY KIND OF A DEMARCHE FROM THE ISRAELI
GOVERNMENT, FROM THE EMBASSY HERE?

A. NO, I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE HAD A DEMARCHE. I KNOW
THAT WE HAVE INFORMED THE ISRAELI EMBASSY.

Q. WHEN WAS THIS?

A. LAST WEEK.

Q. WHAT DID YOU INFORM THEM OF?

A. WE INFORMED THEM ESSENTIALLY OF THE FACTS AS I HAVE
DESCRIBED THEM HERE TODAY.

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Q. THAT THEY HAD APPLIED, AND THAT THERE WAS NO DEPART-
MENT OPPOSITION TO SUCH A STEP?

A. NO. I HAVE NOT ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF OPPOSITION.
I STATED WHAT THE REQUIREMENTS ARE FOR SOMEONE TO
REGISTER UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT -- AND
THAT IT REPRESENTS NO CHANGE -- ABSOLUTELY NO CHANGE IN
OUR POLICY TOWARDS THE PLO.

Q. IS THIS THE FIRST TIME THERE HAVE BEEN FEELERS
TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT FOR ESTABLISHING A PLO OFFICE OUT-
SIDE OF NEW YORK?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY PREVIOUS INTENT OR APPLICATION,
BUT I AM NOT SAYING THAT DEFINITELY.

DEFINITELY, I HAVE NEVER BEEN INFORMED, AND I HAVE
NEVER BEEN AWARE THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY ATTEMPT BEFORE.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY THIS POINT. IF THESE PEOPLE
HAD APPLIED TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT--TO A
CONSUL OVERSEAS -- FOR VISAS AS REPRESENTING THE PLO,
AND SEEKING TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES AND OPEN A PLO
INFORMATION OFFICE, YOU HAVE SAID THAT THE VISA WOULD HAVE

REQUIRED A WAIVER.

A. YES.

Q. NO, THEY DIDN'T DO THAT, OBVIOUSLY. DOES THE -- IS YOUR INVESTIGATION ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS ANY FRAUD INVOLVED?

A. OUR INVESTIGATION IS TO DETERMINE WHAT KIND OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS THEY HAVE AND WHERE AND HOW THEY GOT THEIR VISAS. AND THIS IS SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH WE ARE IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Q. ARE THERE SIMILAR INFORMATION OFFICES IN WASHINGTON?

A. THERE IS A RHODESIAN INFORMATION OFFICE.

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Q. WHAT ELSE?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Q. WAIT A MINUTE, RHODESIA IS NOT QUITE THE SAME, THOUGH. RHODESIA IS A TERRITORY WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY A GOVERNMENT YOU MAY NOT RECOGNIZE. BUT THIS IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT DOESN'T EVEN PROFESS TO BE A GOVERNMENT.

A. BUT IT IS NOT THE ORGANIZATION THAT REGISTERS. IT IS A PERSON WHO REGISTERS.

Q. BUT ON BEHALF OF SETTING UP AN INFORMATION OFFICE.

A. THAT IS RIGHT.

Q. ON BEHALF OF THE PLO.

A. RIGHT.

Q. SO, I GUESS WHAT I AM ASKING YOU, IS THERE ANY INFORMATION OFFICE FOR A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, A FOREIGN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, THAT IS SET UP THAT WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THIS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER. YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Q. I WANT TO CLARIFY THIS POINT. HAD THEY ANNOUNCED WHEN THEY WERE APPLYING FOR THE VISA THAT THEY WERE

GOING TO WASHINGTON TO TRY AND OPEN AN OFFICE, WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED A VISA?

A. WHAT I HAVE STATED, AND I WILL STATE IT AGAIN, IS THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATED WITH THE PLO, WHO SO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION, WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO OBTAIN A WAIVER BEFORE HE RECEIVED A VISA. THAT IS THE GENERAL PROCEDURE THAT IS FOLLOWED.

NOW, I AM JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DETAILS OF THE VISA THESE TWO PEOPLE HAD UNTIL WE HAVE THE RESULTS OF OUR INVESTIGATION, WHICH I AM TOLD, I AM ASSURED, WILL BE COMPLETED VERY SOON.

Q. NO, BUT I AM ASKING SPECIFICALLY IF THEY HAD STATED THAT THEY WERE GOING TO OPEN AN OFFICE HERE, WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED A VISA?

A. I REALLY CANNOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE IT UP?

A. YES.

Q. HAVE ANY VISAS EVER BEEN ISSUED TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS PLO'S?

A. PEOPLE WHO WERE AT THE OBSERVER MISSION.

Q. APART FROM THE OBSERVER MISSION.

A. NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE, BUT I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK THAT. I AM NOT SURE.

Q. CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THE NAMES OF THESE GENTLEMEN, THE ONE WHO IS HERE, THE ONE WHO IS NOT?

A. THE NAMES AS REPORTED IN PRESS I AM TOLD ARE CORRECT. SABRI ELIAS JIRYIS AND ISSAM SARTEWI.

Q. WHICH ONE IS HERE?

A. MR. JIRYIS IS STILL HERE.

Q. AND WHERE HAS MR. SARTEWI GONE?

A. HE HAS LEFT. I DO NOT KNOW WHERE HE WENT.

Q. HAS HE LEFT THE COUNTRY?

A. YES. I AM TOLD HE HAS LEFT.
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Q. YOU MEAN YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD BY SOMEONE IN GOVERNMENT.

A. YES, WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH JUSTICE, AND I --

Q. CERTAINLY SOMEONE IS KEEPING TRACK ON THESE PEOPLE?

Q. THERE ARE SOME POINTS HERE THAT DISTURB ME. FIRST
OF ALL, SINCE LAST JULY, FROM THIS ROSTRUM -- FIRST OF
ALL, LET ME ASK YOU, IS THIS BRIEFING THAT YOU ARE
GIVING US -- HAVE YOU CLEARED THIS WITH THE SECRETARY
OF STATE? DID HE GIVE YOU THESE INSTRUCTIONS?

A. I AM BRIEFING HERE AS SPOKESMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT.

Q. WELL, WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IS WHETHER OR NOT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS AWARE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT AND
HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH YOU WITH REGARD TO GIVING PUBLIC
INFORMATION THAT YOU ARE DISPENSING HERE NOW?

A. I CANNOT BE IN THE POSITION OF INDICATING WHICH LINE
IS CLEARED BY THE SECRETARY AND WHICH IS NOT.

Q. WELL, IS HE AWARE OF THIS CIRCUMSTANCE, THIS
DEVELOPMENT?

A. IS HE AWARE THAT THESE TWO MEN HAVE BEEN IN TOWN, ONE,
AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS APPROACHED BY PRIVATE
CITIZENS, WHO WERE APPROACHED BY THE TWO PEOPLE IN
QUESTION -- IS THAT YOUR QUESTION?

Q. WELL, LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT.

A. IN GENERAL, YES.

Q. IN GENERAL?

A. YES.

Q. AT THIS POINT, MAY I RENEW MY REQUEST THAT THE
SECRETARY OF STATE APPEAR SOMEWHERE AND LET US QUESTION
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HIM ABOUT CERTAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD SO THAT WE WILL KNOW WHERE HE ACTUALLY STANDS ON SOME THINGS. IS THIS FAIR ENOUGH, TO ASK YOU THIS?

A. I WILL RELAY YOUR REQUEST.

Q. SINCE JULY, WE HAVE BEEN ASKING, HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONTACT WITH THE PLO -- ANY CONTACT, NO QUALIFICATION, CONTACT -- APART FROM THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH YOU INSISTED WERE THE ONLY THINGS, THE ONLY CONTACTS, --

A. RIGHT.

Q. -- BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS --

A. RIGHT.

Q. -- IN BEIRUT.

A. RIGHT.

Q. AND NOW YOU ARE SPEAKING --

A. AND ALSO IN NEW YORK, JOE.

Q. WELL, YOU DIDN'T MENTION NEW YORK. BUT WE'LL GRANT YOU NEW YORK.

A. ALL RIGHT, BUT NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTEXT.

Q. NOW YOU ARE COMING ALONG WITH SOMETHING NEW IN THE WAY OF LANGUAGE. NOW YOU ARE SAYING THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN ANY SUBSTANTIVE WAY, WHICH IS A VASTLY DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BEFORE.

A. JOE, IT IS NOT, AND IT DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN CONTACTS THAT WE HAVE HAD IN BEIRUT CONCERNING SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE IN BEIRUT, WHICH WE HAVE CONFIRMED TO YOU, AND THE MINIMAL ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS THAT OUR MISSION IN NEW YORK HAD WITH THE OBSERVER MISSION.

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Q. ARE THOSE THE ONLY TWO EXAMPLES OF NON-SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT YOU CAN COME UP WITH?

A. THAT IS ALL I CAN THINK OF.

Q. SO NOW THE ONLY CONTACT THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE WITH THE PLO IS SECURITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE. YOU HAVE NOW ADDED ADMINISTRATIVE.

A. NO, I HAVE NOT ADDED IT. EXCUSE ME, BUT THE OBSERVER MISSION HAS BEEN THERE FOR SOME TIME.

Q. YES.

A. AND THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MINIMAL CONTACT THAT THE USUN HAS WITH VARIOUS PEOPLE WHO COME TO NEW YORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE UN.

Q. FINE.

A. AND THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CHANGE, AND WHAT I AM EMPHASIZING IS THAT OUR POLICY ON ANY SUBSTANTIVE CONTACTS BY U.S. OFFICIALS HAS NOT CHANGED. I THINK YOU ARE BEING SEMANTIC.

Q. I AM BEING SEMANTIC.

A. YES.

Q. I LEARNED IT AT YOUR KNEE (LAUGHTER). LOOK, WHAT KIND OF CONTACT CAN THERE BE BUT SEMANTIC. I WOULD LIKE TO NOW BRING IT UP TO DATE, BECAUSE WE HEAR ABOUT THESE CONTACTS AFTER THEY HAPPEN, AS YOU REALIZE.

A. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONTACT WITH THESE TWO --

Q. FIRST THERE WAS NO CONTACT AT ALL. THEN THERE WAS THE BEIRUT CONTACT. NOW THERE IS NO CONTACT WITH SECURITY, EXCEPT ADMINISTRATIVE.

JUST SO WE CAN HAVE THE RECORD STRAIGHT, WHAT KIND OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTACT IS CURRENTLY PERMISSIBLE UNDER YOUR GUIDELINES, OR THE SECRETARY'S GUIDELINES, WITH THE PLO?

A. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY --

Q. I DON'T WANT "NO CHANGE," I WANT A POSITIVE ANSWER.

A. -- PROHIBITING ANY SUBSTANTIVE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO. I THINK THE RECORD WILL CLEARLY SHOW THAT THERE HAS

BEEN CONFIRMATION OF NON-SUBSTANTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE TYPE CONTACTS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PLO MISSION IN NEW YORK --

MINIMAL CONTACTS. THERE ALSO HAVE BEEN CONTACTS CONNECTED WITH THE SECURITY OF OUR PERSONNEL AT THE EMBASSY IN BEIRUT. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER CONTACTS.

Q. WOULD INFORMATIONAL CONTACTS BE CONSIDERED NON-SUBSTANTIVE? IF YOU ARE JUST GETTING INFORMATION. AFTER ALL, THAT IS WHAT THEY ARE HERE FOR, TO GIVE YOU INFORMATION.

A. FROM WHO?

Q. THE PLO. WILL YOU ACCEPT INFORMATIONAL CONTACT FROM THE PLO, IS THE SIMPLE QUESTION?

A. I SAID WE WILL HAVE NO CONTACT WITH THEM.

Q. YOU TOLD ME NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT. I AM ASKING YOU IF YOU WILL HAVE INFORMATIONAL CONTACT. NOT HAVE YOU, WILL YOU.

A. WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION?

Q. I DON'T KNOW. WHATEVER INFORMATION THEY WANT TO GIVE YOU. HOW DO I KNOW? I DON'T WORK FOR THEM.

A. IT DEPENDS. IF IT IS INFORMATION RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION OF THE OBSERVER MISSION AT THE UN, THEN THAT'S ONE KIND OF INFORMATION. IF IT WAS RELATED TO SECURITY INFORMATION IN BEIRUT, THEN WE WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE THAT KIND OF INFORMATION.

Q. HOW ABOUT IF IT IS INFORMATION RELATED TO THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST? WILL YOU ACCEPT INFORMATION FROM THEN ON, FOR INSTANCE, WHAT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. PERSONALLY, ON BACKGROUND, I WOULD SAY THAT WOULD CONSTITUTE A SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT AND WOULD BE PROHIBITED.

Q. WHY CAN'T YOU SAY IT AS THE SPOKESMAN?

A. BECAUSE YOU ARE ASKING ME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS. YOU ARE TRYING TO BE VERY PRECISE, I THINK, AND RATHER LEGALISTIC ABOUT IT, AND I WANT TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS IN MY

ANSWERS TO YOU. AND THAT IS WHY IT IS ON BACKGROUND.

Q. IT IS NOT BEING FRIVOLOUS, YOU REALIZE.

A. I KNOW IT IS NOT FRIVOLOUS, AND I AM NOT BEING FRIVOLOUS --

Q. YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LEGALISMS WHICH GO ON IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

Q. YOU KNOW, WITH ALL MY EFFORT, I JUST CANNOT ANTICIPATE -- ALL OF THE QUESTIONS --

Q. IT IS A LEGAL WORLD.

A. I KNOW, BUT YOU ARE WISER THAN I AM. AND YOU KNEW, BEFORE YOU COME IN HERE, ALL THE QUESTIONS YOU WERE GOING TO ASK ME. AND I WILL BE VERY HONEST WITH YOU, I ANTICIPATE A LOT OF THEM, BUT I DO NOT ANTICIPATE ALL OF THEM.

Q. I NEVER DREAMED THIS QUESTION IN ADVANCE. IT IS THE WAY YOU INSINUATE NEW WORDS LIKE "SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YOU JUST CHANGE THE DEFINITION EVERY DAY.

A. NO --

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO TRY TO MAKE IT STAND STILL FOR A WHILE.

A. IT HAS NOT CHANGED.

Q. ON ANOTHER ASPECT OF THIS THING, A NARROW POINT. NOW THAT THE SYRIAN OR ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE HAS TAKEN OVER BEIRUT, DO THE SECURITY CONTACTS WITH THE PLO CONTINUE, AND INDEED WILL THEY CONTINUE INDEFINITELY?

A. I AM TOLD THEY HAVE ENDED.

Q. THEY HAVE ENDED?

A. YES.

Q. DO YOU KNOW OF ANY CASES WHERE A PERSON HAS APPLIED TO BE A FOREIGN AGENT OR TO REPRESENT SOMETHING LIKE THE PLO, OR A FOREIGN COUNTRY, HAS BEEN TURNED DOWN?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER. YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK THE

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Q. DID YOU SAY THAT THE CONTACTS WITH BEIRUT HAVE ENDED?

A. YES.

Q. NOW, LET ME ASK YOU THIS. AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION -- AND THIS IS PART OF THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION -- THE PLATFORM SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THE CONTACTS, THE NEGOTIATIONS, DEALINGS BY THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE BETWEEN STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AND THE SENATE MINORITY LEADER HUGH SCOTT OF PENNSYLVANIA, SPECIFICALLY SAID, "WE WANT TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT WE ARE NOT DEALING WITH THE PLO." AND WHAT IS THIS BUT A DEAL? WHAT IS THIS BUT A CONTACT?
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A. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONTACT.

Q. WELL, THE MAN WENT OVER TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT. ISN'T THAT A PART OF THE GOVERNMENT? OR DOESN'T THE STATE DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AS BEING AN ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT?

A. THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT SOMEONE FROM GOING TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND MAKING APPLICATION UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT. INDEED, IT IS REQUIRED BY OUR LAW.

Q. YES, A PERSON CAN DO THAT, BUT THIS PERSON HAPPENS TO BE A PALESTINIAN WHO WAS HERE -- OR TWO OF THEM -- I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY ARE HERE, AS A MATTER OF FACT -- AND THEY HAVE GOT AMERICAN VISAS. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN CONTACT SOMEWHERE.

A. AS I TOLD YOU, ON THE EXACT STATUS OF THESE PERSONS IN THE COUNTRY, THE KIND OF VISA THEY HAVE, THE KIND OF TRAVEL DOCUMENT THEY HAVE -- THIS IS WHAT IS UNDER INVESTIGATION --

Q. I JUST WONDERED --

Q. JUST ONE MORE QUESTION, IF I MAY? --

A. BUT, JOE, WHAT YOU DESCRIBED AS OUR POLICY -- I JUST WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THAT POLICY REMAINS. AND I DO NOT

ACCEPT YOUR DESCRIPTION OF THE FACT THAT THIS MAN WHO HAS MADE APPLICATION CONSTITUTES IN ANY WAY CHANGE IN OUR

POLICY TOWARDS THE PLO.

Q. WELL, THIS IS YOUR POINT, AND THEN WE CAN SEE IT A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE THE SITUATION HAS BEEN

A. WORDS "SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE" OR "NO SUBSTANTIVE ALTERED BY THE WORDS "SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE" OR "NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE", BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE SEEN IT SINCE IT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN RELATION TO THIS STORY ON SATURDAY. PRIOR TO THIS POINT, I HAVE NOT SEEN IT ANYWHERE. THEREFORE I AM ASKING YOU IF THERE IS NO CHANGE, AND YOU SAY ABSOLUTELY NOT. WHY DIDN'T YOU USE THE WORDS "NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT OF ANY KIND" PRIOR TO THIS, PRIOR TO TODAY? WHO IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVER SAID "NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE," "NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT? ON THE PUBLIC RECORD ANYWHERE?

A. MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IS, I THINK, THAT THAT EXPRESSION, THOSE DESCRIPTIVE TWO WORDS, ARE ABSOLUTELY CONSISTENT WITH THE WAY WE HAVE DESCRIBED THE CONTACTS -- WHAT CONTACTS WE HAVE HAD WITH THE PLO AND WHAT CONTACTS WE HAVE NOT HAD WITH THE PLO.

Q. WELL, THE POINT OF FACT IS: OF COURSE, WE CAN FORMULATE THE PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS THAT WOULD JUSTIFY ALMOST ANYTHING. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IN ALL ITS WISDOM, DID NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT UP TO TODAY UNTIL THIS STORY BROKE ABOUT THE PLO OPENED -- A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION -- OPENING UP A PLO OFFICE.

A. LET US GO BACK AND CHECK THE RECORD. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANYTHING INCONSISTENT.

Q. I WISH THE RECORD WOULD BE CHECKED AND THAT YOU --

A. WOULD YOU PLEASE SHOW ME WHERE WHAT I HAVE SAID IN THE PAST IS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT I SAID TODAY?

Q. YES. THE WORDS "NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT."

A. PLEASE SHOW ME.

Q. IS THERE ANY LEGAL WAY OF STOPPING THIS, THE OPENING OF THIS OFFICE? I MAY BE REPEATING A QUESTION THAT HAS BEEN ASKED A COUPLE OF TIMES.

A. I THINK THE QUESTION IS: A PERSON APPLIES, REGISTERS UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT; AND

I GAVE THE CRITERIA. ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ON THAT
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WILL HAVE TO GO TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Q. WHEN DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATION
BEGIN AND WHEN DO YOU EXPECT IT TO END?

A. IT BEGAN WHEN WE BECAME AWARE THAT THESE PEOPLE
WERE HERE WITHIN THE LAST TWO WEEKS. I AM NOT SURE
WHEN THAT DAY WAS, AND I HOPE AND I UNDERSTAND IT WILL
END VERY SOON.

Q. AND YOUR INVESTIGATION IS BASICALLY TO SEE HOW THEY
ENTERED THE COUNTRY, RIGHT?

A. TO CHECK THEIR STATUS, RIGHT.

Q. BUT ARE YOU EXPLORING THEIR PURPOSE, OR DO YOU
ACCEPT THAT INFORMATION AS THEIR PURPOSE?

A. NO; I AM NOT ACCEPTING OR REJECTING ANYTHING. I AM
NOT ABLE TO COMMENT UNTIL I SEE THE RESULTS OF THE
INVESTIGATION.

Q. I'M JUST TRYING TO GET INTO THE SCOPE OF THE
INVESTIGATION. DOES IT GO INTO HOW THEY GOT HERE?
IS THAT THE (INAUDIBLE)?

A. THAT IS THE GIST OF IT.

Q. THAT'S THE GIST OF IT -- NOT WHAT THEY'RE DOING
HERE.

A. THAT IS RIGHT.

Q. ARE THEY BOTH HOLDING SUDANESE PASSPORTS?

A. I AM JUST NOT ABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AS TO
THE KINDS OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS THEY HAVE. ONE HAS LEFT,
BUT THIS IS WHAT IS BEING INVESTIGATED.

Q. WELL, I ASSUME WHEN THEY FILE THE APPLICATION THEY
SHOW WHETHER THEY'RE CITIZENS OR NOT CITIZENS AND WHAT
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COUNTRIES THEY'RE CITIZENS OF; DON'T THEY?

A. I HAVE NOT SEEN THE APPLICATION.

Q. WELL, REGARDLESS OF THE LEGAL STATUS, AND THE LEGAL PROBLEMS OF OPENING THIS OFFICE, I WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH THE ATTITUDE OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO THE IDEA OF OPENING HERE A PLO INFORMATION OFFICE.

A. I WILL JUST REPEAT WHAT I SAID EARLIER. ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS REALLY HAVE TO BE DIRECTED TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT. BUT MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT IS THAT THE PERSON IS PERMITTED OR HIS APPLICATION IS APPROVED IF WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO CONFORMS TO OUR LAWS, AND ANY PERSONS STAFFING SUCH AN OFFICE HAVE LEGAL STATUS UNDER OUR VISA LAWS. I AM TOLD THAT IF THOSE CONDITIONS ARE MET THERE IS NO LEGAL BAR TO ITS BEING OPENED OR TO THE PERSONS PERFORMING THE FUNCTIONS THAT THEY ARE APPLYING FOR.

Q. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I ASKED. I WANT TO KNOW YOUR OWN POLITICAL ATTITUDE TO IT -- THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THIS OFFICE.

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS ESSENTIALLY A LEGAL DECISION AND NOT A POLITICAL DECISION.

Q. IT'S OF DIPLOMATIC IMPORTANCE, OR WE WOULDN'T BE DISCUSSING THIS FOR THE LAST HALF HOUR IN SUCH EXCRUCIATING DETAIL.

THE QUESTION THAT IS RAISED IS A SIMPLE ONE: WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ATTITUDE TO THE POSSIBLE SETTING UP OF A PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.?

A. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT IT IS ESSENTIALLY A LEGAL QUESTION.

Q. YOU'RE NOT EVEN PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE HERE THAT IT HAS DIPLOMATIC IMPORTANCE?
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A. THE QUESTION IS RELATED AS TO WHETHER THE OFFICE OPENS OR NOT AND IS NOT BASED ON POLITICAL JUDGMENTS NOR ON JUDGMENTS OTHER THAN LEGAL DECISIONS.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT. YOU'RE DIVIDING TWO THINGS UP--ONE LEGAL --

A. YES.

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Q. -- AND YOU'RE TRYING TO HANG ALL OF YOUR ANSWER ON THAT, AND I THINK THE POINT THAT IS BEING RAISED HERE IS: WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTITUDE TO THE POSSIBLE OPENING UP OF THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN WASHINGTON?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THAT WE HAVE AN ATTITUDE.

Q. WOULD YOU TAKE THE QUESTION?

Q. DON'T YOU HAVE TO GIVE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AS PART OF THEIR DECISION? DON'T THEY COME TO YOU AUTOMATICALLY, TO STATE, AND SAY: "DO YOU THINK THAT THE PLO SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO OPEN AN OFFICE HERE -- YES OR NO?"

A. I WILL HAVE TO CHECK ON THE PROCEDURES, BUT I WOULD RECALL THAT THERE HAS BEEN A PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK FOR TEN YEARS.

Q. BUT I BELIEVE THAT BEFORE JUSTICE CAN MAKE THAT DECISION THEY DO HAVE TO COME TO YOU AND ASK FOR YOUR OPINION ON THE ISSUE.

A. THE INFORMATION I HAVE AND THE CRITERIA ARE AS I OUTLINED THEM TODAY AND I WILL CHECK FURTHER.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE THAT QUESTION?

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A. YES.

Q. COULD I CLARIFY ONE FINAL POINT HERE?

A. YES.

Q. AS SPOKESMAN YOU ARE SAYING THERE HAS BEEN NO DISCUSSION, NO CONTACT, BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND PLO REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT ISSUES OF THE MIDDLE EAST -- ISSUES OF PEACE AND WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- AND THERE WILL BE NO SUCH CONTACT UNTIL THE PLO RECOGNIZES ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND ACCEPTS 224 AND 338.

A. THAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING.

Q. IS THAT CORRECT?

A. YES.

Q. NO CONTACT -- WOULD YOU QUALIFY THAT, PLEASE? NO
SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT, NO FORMAL CONTACT, NO PERSON-TO-
PERSON CONTACT -- WHAT KIND OF CONTACT?

Q. OBVIOUSLY, CONTACT ABOUT --

Q. NOW, WAIT A MINUTE. YOU'RE NOT ANSWERING THE
QUESTION.

A. I AM NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND YOUR QUESTION.

Q. WELL, THE QUESTION IS: I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT
"CONTACT" MEANS IN YOUR DEFINITION --

A. JOE --

Q. -- BECAUSE "CONTACT" HAS BEEN ALTERED BY THE STATE
DEPARTMENT FROM ONE WEEK TO THE NEXT.

A. FIRST, IT HAS NOT BEEN ALTERED.

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Q. IT HAS BEEN ALTERED.

A. WHERE HAS IT BEEN ALTERED?

Q. YOU SAID "NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT" IS A NEW
EXPRESSION BY THIS DEPARTMENT ON THE PUBLIC RECORD,
AND YOU CAN'T SHOW IT TO ME IN ANY OTHER PLACE.

A. MAY I SAY ON THE PUBLIC RECORD THAT IT IS NOT NEW;
THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE --

Q. JUST A MINUTE. AT THIS POINT I WOULD LIKE YOU TO
SHOW ON THE PUBLIC RECORD TOMORROW WHERE AND WHEN IN
THE PAST "NO SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT WITH THE PLO" WAS EVER
USED BY AN OFFICIAL OF THIS DEPARTMENT ON THE RECORD.

A. JOE --

Q. YOU SHOW IT TO ME.

A. -- OUR DESCRIPTION: THE RECORD IS IN THE PRESS

OFFICE. YOU ARE FREE TO SHOW ME WHERE ANYTHING I HAVE SAID TODAY IS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST.

Q. WELL, YOU'RE TURNING THE EVIDENCE BACK ON ME; YOU'RE

USING THE EXPRESSION. I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHERE YOU USED IT BEFORE, AND NOW YOU WON'T ANSWER IT.

Q. ON A PERHAPS RELATED ISSUE --

A. PLEASE. WHY NOT?

Q. -- DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF SYRIAN FORCES INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q. ALL RIGHT.
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Q. WOULD YOU -- RELATED TO THAT, WOULD YOU TELL US AGAIN WHAT THE U.S. POSITION IS REGARDING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON? I'D LIKE, YOU KNOW, TO GET THAT ON THE RECORD EVERY NOW AND THEN IN CASE YOU CHANGE SUBSTANTIVELY.

NOW THAT SYRIAN TANKS ARE ALL THROUGH LEBANON, WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON? TELL US AGAIN.

A. THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES ON LEBANON IS THAT WE SUPPORT THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, ITS NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION.

Q. IS THAT THE STATUS OF LEBANON TODAY -- INDEPENDENT AND TERRITORIALLY SOVEREIGN?

A. WELL, BARRY --

Q. YOU SAID "INDEPENDENCE" TOO. DID YOU NOT USE THAT WORD --

A. WHAT?

Q. -- IN YOUR LITTLE DESCRIPTION?

A. ADD "INDEPENDENCE." SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE,

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND NATIONAL UNITY.

NO ONE -- MUCH LESS ME -- CERTAINLY HAS MINIMIZED
THE DIFFICULT PERIOD THAT LEBANON AND THE LEBANESE
PEOPLE HAVE GONE THROUGH. TODAY HAPPENS TO BE THE
INDEPENDENCE DAY OF LEBANON, AS A MATTER OF FACT, AND

PRESIDENT SARKIS HAS ADDRESSED THE LEBANESE PEOPLE. HE
HAS STATED HIS HOPES FOR LEBANON , ITS FUTURE, AND HIS
HOPES THAT THE TRAGEDY WHICH HAS BEFALLEN HIS COUNTRY
IS NOW BEHIND. AND WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE NEW
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, WILL BE ABLE
TO REESTABLISH INTERNAL SECURITY AND BE SUCCESSFUL
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IN ITS EFFORTS.

Q. DO YOU THINK THE SYRIAN FORCE IN LEBANON WILL
ENHANCE TERRITORIAL INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY OF LEBANO
N?

A. I THINK THAT IS A QUESTION REALLY FOR THE LEBANESE
TO ANSWER. THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS SAID THAT
IT ACCEPTS THE PRESENCE OF THE ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE,
AND I THINK THAT IS A QUESTION THAT THEY SHOULD
ANSWER.

Q. WELL, YOUR JUDGMENT COINCIDES WITH THEIRS, DO YOU
SAY, OR ARE YOU DEFERRING TO THEM?

A. WE DEFER TO THEM.

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO FIND OUT, IF YOU DON'T
KNOW AT THIS POINT, WHAT THE MAJOR SUBJECTS OF
DISCUSSION WERE BETWEEN PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER AND
SECRETARY KISSINGER ON SATURDAY?

A. I THINK THE SECRETARY'S VIEW IS THAT ANY SUBSTANTIVE
COMMENTS OF THEIR MEETING SHOULD COME FROM THE
PRESIDENT-ELECT. HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY, ABOUT HIS
MEETING, DID TELL ME THIS MORNING ESSENTIALLY WHAT WAS
REPORTED FROM PLAINS ON SATURDAY -- THAT HE THOUGHT IT
WAS A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE MEETING AND HE WAS MOST
APPRECIATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S HOSPITALITY IN
RECEIVING HIM.

Q. WELL, WHAT ABOUT SOME GENERAL SUBJECTS--ON THE
MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA? I MEAN, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW
MUCH TIME WAS DEVOTED TO THEM?

A. NO.

Q. YOU CAN'T ENDEAVOR TO FIND THAT OUT?

A. THE SECRETARY FEELS THAT ALL SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS

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SHOULD COME FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE TRANSITION OFFICE HERE?

A. I CHECKED WITH MR. EAGLEBURGER JUST BEFORE I CAME DOWN. HE HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY INFORMATION FROM MR. LAKE INDICATING AS TO WHEN THEY PLAN TO OCCUPY THE OFFICES HERE.

Q. HAVE YOU, THE STATE DEPARTMENT, CLEARED THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO WILL OCCUPY THE OFFICES?

A. FIRST, MR. LAKE HAS NOT ANNOUNCED THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS TEAM. THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS APPLIED FOR CLEARANCE AND HAS RECEIVED IT IS MR. LAKE.

Q. WELL, JUST A SMALL POINT ON THAT PLO STORY. COULD THE PEOPLE IN THE PLO INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK TRAVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY? HAVE THEY BEEN TRAVELING AROUND THE COUNTRY; ARE THEY FREE TO DO SO?

A. ON BACKGROUND, BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE CLEARLY IN MIND WHO THEY ARE AND THEIR STATUS -- BUT, ON BACKGROUND, AND I WILL CORRECT MYSELF IF I AM IN ERROR -- I THINK ONE OF THEM, AT LEAST ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THAT STAFF, IS EITHER AN AMERICAN CITIZEN OR A PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIEN; AND, THEREFORE, THERE WOULD BE NO RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR TRAVEL.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE OTHER PEOPLE?

A. PARDON ME?

Q. THERE ARE JUST TWO PEOPLE UP THERE?

A. ON BACKGROUND. THAT IS A VERY SMALL STAFF. I DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY THERE ARE, BUT I AM NOT SURE IT IS MORE THAN TWO OR THREE.

Q. THANK YOU.

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Q. SO THAT IF THIS OFFICE COULD BE -- WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO --

Q. -- IF THIS OFFICE WERE SET UP WITH AMERICAN CITIZENS,
THERE WOULD BE NO RESTRICTION ON TRAVEL.

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. IT IS SIMPLY FOREIGN AGENTS.

A. RIGHT.

Q. THANK YOU.

A. OKAY. ROBINSON

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